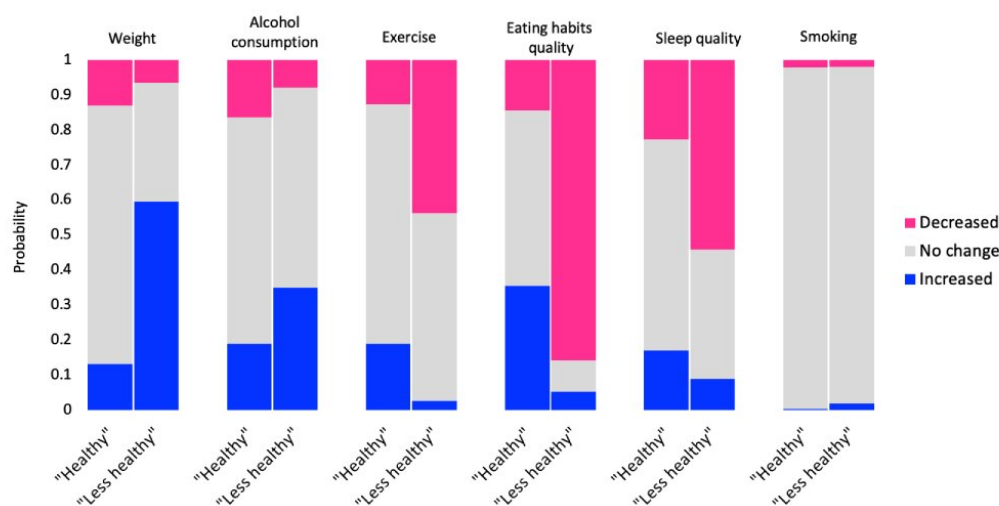


Examining how Canadians' lifestyle behaviors changed during the COVID-19 pandemic

May 26 2023, by Claire Loewen



Two identified classes of change in weight and lifestyle patterns as a result of the pandemic. Classes were identified using LCA based on self-reported changes (prepandemic vs baseline) in weight, physical activity level, smoking, alcohol use, and sleep quality. LCA: latent class analysis. Credit: *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance* (2023). DOI: 10.2196/43786

Sixty percent of roughly 1,600 Canadians who took part in a new McGill University study say their lifestyle habits either stayed the same or improved during the COVID-19 pandemic. On the flip side, 40% of participants say they adopted less healthy lifestyle habits, including

worsened eating habits, sleep quality, decreased physical activity and weight gain.

The research is based on the Canadian COVIDiet study of Canadians between the ages of 18 to 89 years old. Researchers from McGill's School of Human Nutrition collected data from across the country during the first wave of infections. Using latent class analysis, a [statistical method](#) that helps us group together similar individuals based on their characteristics or behaviors, two patterns of lifestyle changes emerged: healthy and less healthy habits.

"The good news is that the majority of participants maintained or even improved their [lifestyle habits](#)" said Stéphanie Chevalier, Associate Professor of the School of Human Nutrition, who led the team of researchers.

"Interestingly, people who reported dissatisfaction with their [body image](#), experienced depression or stress, or identified as a gender minority were more likely to adopt less healthy habits," added Anne-Julie Tessier, a research fellow at Harvard University and lead author of this study.

"Our research may help in identifying people with higher health risks during a crisis such as a pandemic, and in developing strategies to support people facing mental health challenges to prevent potential health deterioration in the future."

'Lifestyle Behavior Changes and Associated Risk Factors During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Results from the Canadian COVIDiet Online Cohort Study' by Anne-Julie Tessier, Stéphanie Chevalier et al., was published in *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*.

More information: Anne-Julie Tessier et al, Lifestyle Behavior Changes and Associated Risk Factors During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Results from the Canadian COVIDiet Online Cohort Study, *JMIR Public*

Health and Surveillance (2023). [DOI: 10.2196/43786](https://doi.org/10.2196/43786)

Provided by McGill University

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